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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 003568

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STATE FOR INR/R/MR, NEA/PPD, NEA/PPA, NEA/AGS, INR/IZ, INR/P

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTION;
BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: Discussion on the Constitution was the major editorial theme of the daily newspapers on August 30, 2005.
END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES

1A. "The National Assembly Bypasses its Dissolution"
(Al-Sabah (Iraqi Media Network, pro-coalition) published a page-two editorial by Adel Abdullah about the National Assembly's endorsement of the draft constitution)

"There are some groups that have disputes with the drafting of the constitution and which are trying to dissolve the National Assembly. This option may be the result of the failure of the constitutional committee to reach harmony on the constitution. But, first, we have to know what the real reasons and interests behind these attempts are. The Kurds generally will not be affected if the National Assembly were to be dissolved. Sunni Arabs do not care about that issue because they do not have enough representation in the National Assembly. Regarding American interests, the U.S. has two goals in Iraq. The first goal is connected with American strategic interest and this was achieved through the occupation of Iraq. On the other hand, the second goal still remains unaccomplished because it was connected to the search for WMD and establishing democracy in Iraq. Whether or not the second goal is achieved the U.S. has nothing to lose. As a result, the only loser in the dissolution of the National Assembly will be the United Shiite Alliance and its current government. Only Shiite political parties that participated in this government will suffer from the bitterness of this loss. In fact, we do not have any time to waste to prevent the dissolution of the national assembly because the groups that are working to achieve this may succeed. Therefore, we have to look for a way to reach harmony among all these groups. Otherwise, the dissolution of the National Assembly means that all great efforts to build new Iraq will be demolished. The UIA's (United Iraqi Alliance) government must work now with some of those groups in order to develop a new strategy to prevent the dissolution of the National Assembly in case the constitution is rejected in the referendum."

"Ask Washington and No One Else"
(Az-Zaman (independent and anti-coalition) published this back-page editorial by Fateh Abdul Salam)

"President Bush addressed U.S. soldiers in Iraq and told them that they have to endure more sacrifices in Iraq. He gave this speech two days ago and this statement shows that he continues to offer the same policy in Iraq regardless of the continued bloodshed of American soldiers. At the same time, the Chief of Staff Gen. Myers blames American politicians for not paying attention to the dangers of the security situation in Iraq. Before that, Bush personally intervened to save the Iraqi constitution draft. However, it seems that the results do not correspond with the plan to accomplish the American mission in Iraq. Why does Washington feel embarrassed and worried? Does it think that casualties are not high? Has Washington discovered that Iraqi officials are ignorant about their country's future? Has Iraq's future become unclear for Iraqi and Americans too? Does the decision to withdraw require suitable timing to announce? I think that the Americans are better than Iraqi officials in describing situations in the country because they are deployed throughout Iraq and they do not live inside the Green Zone like Iraqi officials. What will happen to the constitutional process and what is the result of it? If you

want to know you better ask Washington because it has a true understanding of the Iraqi scene. Do not ask Iraqi officials because they are ignorant and they do not have an accurate analysis of Iraq's reality."

"Our Constitution and the Arabs"

(Al-Sabah (Iraqi Media Network, pro-coalition) published a page-three editorial by Sattar Jabar)

"Amr Musa threatens, Saudi Arabia has reservations, Syria sends car bombs, Amman plans to bring Ba'athists back to power in Iraq, and Qatar gets ready to launch a media uprising against Iraqis who drafted their constitution with their own blood. Those groups described our constitution as the American constitution despite the fact that most of them did not even have a look at it. We did not see any of our Arab brothers congratulate us for completing the draft of our constitution. They did not say this constitution represents all Iraqis. In fact, they tried to thwart the drafting of this constitution. But, the time of freedom has come and freedom has a very expensive cost that we must pay in order to end the era of dictatorship in Iraq. Arabs have sold their honor and dignity in order to be friends with Washington and Israel. On the other hand, we selected our friends voluntarily because we wanted a friend that could help us cure our chronic diseases. It is an honor to befriend anyone who helps our country and we reject anyone who wants to steal our wealth and make our lands a battleground. Today, the Iraqi people have become the landlords of the Middle East because they refused dictatorship. Our constitution does not contain any further tyrannical principles of the Ba'ath Party because it is a constitution of free but poor people, who will spread peace throughout an Islamic world that is still suffering from dictatorship and tyranny."

"The Liberation of Iraq's Sunnis"

(Asharq al-Awsat (independent, London-based, Saudi owned) published a page-eight editorial by Ahmad Al-Rub'ee on Sunni Arabs in Iraq)

"We regret that a small group in Iraq succeeded in kidnapping Sunnis Arabs and speaking in their names. This has lead to difficulties and the country will pay a high price for them. We truly regret that in some of those Sunni regions, they held demonstrations, raised the dictator's photos, and at least some of the Sunni representatives have worked against criminalizing the former Ba'ath Party."

We feel sorry that they now have a spokesperson who speaks for them but claims that he represent all Sunnis (the educated, the activists, politicians, academics, and tribal members).

We feel sorry that it's the extremists who occupy most of the Sunni mosques and that they make efforts to turn their Friday's prayers into provocative calls to violence. Those who claim that they are representing the Sunnis are deceiving us; they are talking against the occupation force but they are encouraging violence against Iraqis. They talk about federalism as if it will divide Iraq but they are confused about the differences between democratic federalism and sectarianism federalism which would divide Iraq's regions according to ethnicities. The real Sunni representatives should raise their voices; they must not allow others to scare Sunnis or to mislead them about the coming referendum process as they did before when they called for a boycott of the election process and deprived their fellow Sunnis from having enough representatives in the parliament. Those Sunni minorities are responsible for diluting the political equation here in Iraq. They speak in the name of democracy and freedom but they want to take us back to the dictatorial past and they are now the echo of terrorism."

"Successful Bet"

(Al-Adala (affiliated with SCIRI) published a page-four editorial by Dr. Ali Khalif about the constitution)

"Although some people have reservations about some articles in the draft constitution, which considered an important factor for the success of the constitutional process, because it is impossible to satisfy everyone in a country like Iraq that has different sects. It is necessary to ensure Iraqi groups, particularly those who had suffered unjustly, that this will never happen again. This can only be accomplished through a permanent constitution that preserves all Iraqis' rights."

The moribund Ba'ath Party followers who demonstrated carrying the tyrant's picture as a symbol of the rejection of the draft constitution, were negligent respecting the feelings and memories of the mass grave victims. We are not against the democratic tradition of freedom of opinion, but we do not hurt others' feelings by raising picture of a criminal who is waiting for punishment of justice."

This historical accomplishment, the drafting of a constitution, deserves more time for discussion and reflection and it will be presented to the people for a vote. The progressive wheel is moving forward will not be stopped by terrorists because these great Iraqi people who defeated the terrorists on election day will defeat them again on referendum day."

"Welcome Is Not Enough"
(Al-Bayyan (affiliated with the Islamic Al-Dawa Party) published a page-four editorial by Zainab Al-Khafaji about the world's welcoming of the ratification of the Iraqi draft constitution)

"After approving the draft constitution the international community expressed its welcoming of this step as an important Iraqi accomplishment. By all measures the international efforts does not fits Iraq's need of more support to enhancing democracy.

International organizations should perform their duties toward this humanitarian experience, they should offer help and support because words are not enough for this democratic change happening in Iraq.

Iraq has many issues: the deterioration of security due to terrorist attacks, the issue of the deterioration of services, and the oil-for-food issue that is still unsettled, to resolve in order to ensure the rights of Iraqis. These and other issues need international help and hard work, not only a formal international welcoming."

Khalilzad